

Interview:

<https://www.univision.com/noticias/inmigracion-frontera-y-economia-univision-habla-con-kamala-harris-de-temas-de-la-comunidad-hispana-video>

Spreadsheet I've used for the data:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1R0xGk1UhA3xtCo25Za6mU6UVet6vraz_95QMRNlxl_4/edit#gid=0

Jurisprudence:

<https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/promises/biden-promise-tracker/promise/1569/reduce-high-maternal-mortality-rate/> - Promise Tracker

This story mentions Biden admin efforts

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/06/17/health/maternal-health-crisis-medicaid-postpartum-coverage/index.html>

Facebook headline (60 character limit):

Kamala Harris is right about postpartum Medicaid expansion

Twitter headline/social language (240 character limit): Kamala Harris said in an interview that the Biden administration has played an important role in expanding postpartum Medicaid benefits. She is right, and here's why.

Ruling statement:

Postpartum Medicaid coverage expanded from three states to 43 states because of the Biden administration.

Kamala Harris stated on January 29, 2024 in an interview with Univision Noticias:

Main story headline (maximum characters: 100):

Fact-checking Kamala Harris: Did the Biden administration expand postpartum Medicaid coverage?

If your time is short:

- As of January 2021, Illinois, New Jersey and Virginia were the only states in which Medicaid subsidized 12 months of postpartum coverage.
- Today, 43 states have Medicaid coverage until 12 months postpartum.
- The 2021 American Rescue Plan expanded Medicaid postpartum coverage until May 2023. The 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which President Joe Biden signed into law in 2023, gave states the option to make the expansion permanent.

During an interview with Noticias Univision, Vice President Kamala Harris touted the Biden administration's efforts to extend postpartum Medicaid care.

"When I came in as vice president, only three states extended postpartum care Medicaid coverage to 12 months. I issued a call and a challenge to all states. And now 43 states have extended postpartum care for women," [she said](#) Jan. 29.

Postpartum health insurance covers a critical period for recovering from childbirth, which the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services [says](#) includes addressing complications of delivery, ensuring mental health, managing infant care, and transitioning from obstetric to primary care.

Federal law previously required states to provide [pregnancy-related Medicaid coverage](#) until 60 days postpartum. Then, 2021 legislation temporarily gave states the option to extend that coverage to a full calendar year. Legislation in 2022 gave states the option to make the extension permanent.

States offer this coverage using federal funding and the state's own funding.

Health experts told PolitiFact that Harris' claim — on the numbers she cited and the administration's role — was correct.

Coverage increased from three to 43 states

When contacted for comment, Harris' office sent PolitiFact two sources to support the vice president's claim.

The first was a Medicaid Postpartum Coverage [Extension Tracker](#) from KFF, a health policy research and analysis organization. It shows that 43 states have extended Medicaid coverage to 12 months postpartum.

Harris' office also shared U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [information](#) showing that when the Biden administration took office in January 2021, [Illinois](#), [New Jersey](#) and [Virginia](#) were the only states in which Medicaid subsidized 12 months of postpartum coverage.

Did the Biden administration influence the expansion?

Yes, different laws that Biden signed gave states an easier pathway and some federal funding for this expansion. States still partially fund the care, as they had before the expansion.

The 2021 [American Rescue Plan](#) that President Joe Biden signed into law enabled states to temporarily extend Medicaid coverage to 12 months postpartum. The extension began April 1, 2022, and ended in May 2023.

KFF reported that before April 2022, states that wanted to use federal money to expand postpartum care had to do so through a [section 1115 waiver](#). The waiver lets states divert funds

from what's required by federal statutes and try new approaches for administering Medicaid. But the waivers allowed only for temporary changes, not permanent. States could also use only state money to expand postpartum programs, rather than go through the waiver process.

"What the Biden administration did was create a new, arguably easier, pathway through a state plan amendment," said [Maria W. Steenland](#), a Brown University assistant professor of population studies. Under these plan amendments, facilitated by the American Rescue Plan, the federal government and states agree on how to administer the Medicaid program.

Later, the 2022 [Consolidated Appropriations Act](#), which Biden signed into law in 2023, gave states the option to permanently extend postpartum coverage period to 12 months.

States that choose to make this coverage permanent cover those costs using federal and state funds.

"The postpartum extensions are jointly funded with federal and state funds, just as all pregnancy-related coverage is under Medicaid," said Usha Ranji, KFF associate director of women's health policy. Ranji added that the 2021 and 2022 laws did not change the financing arrangement for pregnancy-related coverage.

Many states previously wanted postpartum care expansion

A [2020 study](#) on the impact of extending postpartum Medicaid found that although many states were interested in extending postpartum care, some had not because doing so required getting the temporary [section 1115](#) waiver or using state funds.

Experts said that because the postpartum care expansion is still relatively new, it's not possible yet to measure whether it has reduced postpartum hospitalizations and improved maternal mortality rates.

Steenland co-authored a [study](#) that found a 17% reduction in hospitalizations during the first 60 days postpartum was associated with the Medicaid expansions. The study also found evidence of a smaller decrease in hospitalizations from 61 days to six months postpartum.

Our ruling

Harris said postpartum Medicaid coverage expanded from three states to 43 states because of the Biden administration.

In 2021, when the Biden administration took office, Illinois, New Jersey and Virginia were the only states that had 12 months postpartum Medicaid coverage. Now, 43 states have it.

Biden signed a 2021 law that allowed states to temporarily expand Medicaid postpartum coverage until May 2023, using a combination of federal and state funds. A law Biden signed in 2023 enabled states to make the expansion permanent.

We rate this claim True.

Our Sources

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Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, [Legislative Milestones in Medicaid and CHIP Coverage of Pregnant Women](#), accessed Feb. 1, 2024

CNN, [To help tackle US maternal health crisis, more states extend Medicaid postpartum coverage](#), Jun. 21, 2023

KFF, [Postpartum Coverage Extension in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#), Mar. 18, 2021

National Library of Medicine, [Extending Postpartum Medicaid: State and Federal Policy Options during and after COVID-19](#), Jun. 1, 2021

KFF, [Medicaid Waiver Tracker: Approved and Pending Section 1115 Waivers by State](#), Jan. 23, 2024

CMS.gov, [Biden-Harris Administration Announces the Expansion of Medicaid Postpartum Coverage in Oklahoma: 30 States and D.C. Now Offer a Full Year of Coverage After Pregnancy](#), Mar. 23, 2023

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, [Extend Postpartum Medicaid Coverage](#), accessed Jan. 31, 2024

Health Affairs, [Medicaid Expansion Led To Reductions In Postpartum Hospitalizations](#), accessed Jan. 31, 2024

Phone interview with [Maria W. Steenland](#), Jan. 31, 2024

Email interview with [Rachel Gandell Tetlow](#), senior director of Government and Political Affairs, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Jan. 31, 2024

Email interview with [Ernesto Apreza](#), Deputy Press Secretary at the Office of the Vice President of the United States, Jan. 30, 2024

Phone interview with [Usha R. Ranji](#), associate director of women's health policy at KFF, Jan. 31, 2024

U.S. House of Representatives Black Maternal Health Caucus, [Black Maternal Health Omnibus](#), accessed Jan. 31, 2024

Medicaid.gov, [Medicaid State Plan Amendments](#), accessed Jan. 31, 2024

National Academy for State Health Policy, [State Efforts to Extend Medicaid Postpartum Coverage](#), Feb. 1, 2024

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, [Thousands More People with Medicaid and CHIP Coverage Now Eligible to Access Critical Postpartum Coverage Thanks to the American Rescue Plan](#), Apr. 1, 2022

Idaho Capital Sun, [Postpartum Medicaid expansion is the first step to maternal health equity, experts say](#), Apr. 1, 2023

Medicaid.gov, [Medicaid State Plan Amendments](#), accessed Feb. 1, 2024

National Health Law Program, [Primer: State Plan Amendments v. Section 1115 Waivers](#), May. 20, 2021

Medicaid, [Financial Management](#), accessed Feb. 7, 2024

RESEARCH

QUESTIONS FOR [Maria W. Steenland](#) - 9am call

Pregnancy medicare, be pregnant and have income under the threshold. From the time you're pregnant but. Income are higher than adult thresholds, each state has a different one.

- **“When I came in as vice president, only three states extended postpartum care Medicaid coverage to 12 months. I issued a call and a challenge to all states. And now 43 states have extended postpartum care for women.”**
 - Ask about the number of states - it's very difficult. I don't know whether she's taking the effective date VS the date when it was passed. Outgoing into specific records of when each 1115 waiver was passed.
 - Ask about states the influence that an administration has in this expansion. I think it has a lot of influence, it is a little bit complicated. Many states were from 60 days (after the month of the birth falls) to 12 months. It was published in 2021 and it has a table of states that had considered in 2020 extended Medicaid many states were interested in this policy earlier. The pathway through this states could do this is an 1115 waiver. What the Biden administration did was create a new arguably easier pathway through a state plan amendment, part of American Rescue Plan. Most of them have done that through an SPA important policy in terms of facility. What we see from this paper from 2021, many states had considered it but they had not passed. After the legislation that gave states the possibility through a state plan amendment in relatively short order were able to include that the 12 states extension. Many were considering it before, but almost states have it now nad almost all have it through a SPA. Providing that alternative pathway was very influential in making it easier for states to implement a 12 months.
- **Effects of expansion?** The effects of the expansions are unknown now. It's a bit complicated, the extensions are basically not important practically for people until summer 2023. Continuous medicaid coverage during the pandemic. Everyone had a 12 months extension in most states, so if you want to evaluate the implications, we are really just starting, evaluating them would take time. A year or two before everyone would have data on the impact of 12 months postpartum extensions. Theoretically, pregnancy related complications and mortality. Over half of pregnancy related deaths are for after birth, including after 60 days, so the idea is to make sure that people can maintain their health coverage for a full year, all throughout the first year postpartum. The thinking is that health insurance helps you get healthcare which can help you prevent from getting sick.

Children's health insurance program - different income eligibility limits.

- How has it led to reduced postpartum hospitalizations (and likely) better maternal mortality rates?

12 months postpartum draw from the literature around Medicare expansion, which did include postpartum insurance. Medicare expansion increased women expansion, and therefore maintain coverage beyond the first year. Medicaid expansion increase the continuity and healthcare use expansion. Two studies looking at hospitalizations and the other one looking at mortality.

- We found a 17 percent reduction in hospitalizations during the first sixty days postpartum associated with the Medicaid expansions and some evidence of a smaller decrease in hospitalizations between sixty-one days and six months postpartum. Our findings indicate that expanding Medicaid coverage led to improved postpartum health for low-income birthing people.

That's a different policy and it's reasonable to make predictions but we won't really know until we analyze this one.

"The administration has identified many policies and actions to help improve the U.S. maternal mortality crisis that ACOG has strongly endorsed, including extending Medicaid coverage nationwide to 12 months postpartum. Efforts to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage have historically been bipartisan, and this particular policy has consistently gained traction in states across the country over the years. ACOG believes this has been a result of many actors working together, including the administration, federal and state policy makers, the medical community, patient advocacy organizations, community and commercial partners, and other stakeholders. Additionally, the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act, which President Biden signed into law in 2021, provided an additional, less burdensome pathway for states to voluntarily extend Medicaid coverage for pregnant people from 60 days to one year postpartum. And the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which was signed into law by President Biden in 2022, made that voluntary pathway permanent. The administration has played a key role in furthering this effort and continues to support one of ACOG's policy priorities that would make postpartum Medicaid coverage mandatory in every state. We thank Vice President Harris for her commitment to eliminating preventable maternal deaths, and for her partnership in this work. ACOG looks forward to continuing to work with the administration on solutions to improve maternal health outcomes." -

Rachel Gandell Tetlow

senior director, Government and Political Affairs, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

QUESTIONS FOR Usha R. Ranji (KFF), Associate Director, Women's Health Policy - 12pm call

- **"When I came in as vice president, only three states extended postpartum care Medicaid coverage to 12 months. I issued a call and a challenge to all states. And now 43 states have extended postpartum care for women."**
 - **Ask about the number of states** - Under the Biden administration the 3 states (IL, NJ and VA). The American Rescue Plan soon after the administration started,

and that's a Federal Law. So that federal law allowed for the states to have this option to extend the postpartum period to 12 months, so the first three states were those three, IL, NJ and VA. And then she issued that call to action in December 2021, so at that time only three states had extended postpartum care.

- **Ask about states the influence that an administration has in this expansion.**
 - So there had been some discussion, policy discussion before Biden was elected, but there hadn't been any action until they took office. So the ARP was the federal law that passed both house and senate and Biden signed it that gave this option for states. So prior to that there had been some attempt while Trump was still in office, a law that included this option had passed in the house of representatives but had never gone to the senate that was republican controlled. There had been interest but not action. Before she was VP she was a senator and she was one of the sponsors of the federal Momnibus, a whole other package of legislation about maternal health in general. She has been promoting maternal health related policies even before she was VP.
- **Effects of expansion?** We don't have a lot of recent data since it's all been rolled out and the other thing we need to be watching is that because of the pandemic people were not being dropped off of Medicaid until earlier this year, so now it's a little hard to distinguish the effects of postpartum extension and in general no one was being dropped of Medicaid because of the pandemic. So the most relevant research that we have so far it's before this policy went into effect. In states that had not expanded Medicare a lot more new moms would lose coverage after two months of having a baby. It's hard to separate.
- **How has it led to reduced postpartum hospitalizations (and likely) better maternal mortality rates?** Maternal mortality and hospitalization are issues that are influenced by much more than just coverage. That could take some time to see what the impact is. What happens in utilization of any care, do we see an increase of people getting mental health services or other things that need ongoing care like chronic disease conditions.
- We found a 17 percent reduction in hospitalizations during the first sixty days postpartum associated with the Medicaid expansions and some evidence of a smaller decrease in hospitalizations between sixty-one days and six months postpartum. Our findings indicate that expanding Medicaid coverage led to improved postpartum health for low-income birthing people.



In 2021, the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) of 2021 gave states a [new option](#) to extend Medicaid postpartum coverage to 12 months via a state plan amendment (SPA). This new option took effect on April 1, 2022 and was

originally available for five years; however, the option was made permanent by the [Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023](#). The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released [guidance](#) on December 7, 2021 on how states could implement this option.

STRUCTURE

- Intro: interview + what did she say
- True numbers + add historical numbers
- What role does the administration play
- Effects of expansion, how it has led to reduced postpartum hospitalizations (and likely) better maternal mortality rates.